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TAGS: [ELAB](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [SMIG](#) [KCRM](#) [KPAO](#) [KWMN](#) [GR](#)
OSCE, NATO, MK
SUBJECT: INPUT FOR OSCE HUMAN DIMENSION MEETING

REF: SECSTATE 60838

Classified By: DCM TOM COUNTRYMAN. REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

¶1. (C) Post is grateful for the opportunity per reftel to provide preliminary input on U.S. statements regarding Greece at the upcoming Warsaw OSCE Human Dimension Meeting (HDIM). As context, Embassy notes this is a sensitive period in U.S.-Greece bilateral relations, and the statements made at the HDIM will be closely watched in Athens. In the wake of Greece's veto of a NATO invitation to Macedonia, Greece is particularly sensitive to anything touching on the "name issue" and identity politics. Greece also was unable to report substantial progress in combating Trafficking in Persons last year. Embassy thus welcomes the opportunity now and as the HDIM approaches to work closely with Washington to craft statements that will most effectively advance our human rights agenda with the Greeks.

¶2. (C) Below are issues related to Greece the U.S. delegation to the HDIM may want to raise:

--Roma in Greece: The Roma community continues to be the most marginalized minority in Greece, and Greek officials have done little to improve their situation over the last several years. We made this a high priority at last year's HDIM and in the latest Human Rights Report. Embassy believes it should also be a priority at this year's HDIM. The Roma community consists of indigenous Roma and migrant Roma from Albania and Bulgaria. Some have adopted an urban way of life and have integrated successfully, but most face dire circumstances, living in squalid and inhumane conditions without running water, electricity, and waste removal in make-shift camps on the outskirts of cities. The GOG has taken a few initial steps to address their circumstances, but very little progress has been made. Further details are included in the 2007 Human Rights Report.

--As also detailed in the Human Rights Report, the GOG continues to prevent the self-identification of minority groups, with the exception of the "Muslim minority" of Thrace, and this impacts a number of citizens who identify themselves as Turks, Pomaks (Slavic speaking Muslims), Vlachs, Roma, Arvanites, or Macedonians. This issue is much more politically sensitive for the GOG than Roma issues. The GOG believes that the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne provides the exclusive definition of minorities in the country and defines the rights these minorities have as groups. In accordance with this view, Greece claims that it has only one minority, the "Muslim minority." Consistent with this policy, courts ban the use of the term "Turk" or "Turkish" in associations. In 2008, the ECHR condemned Greece for violation of freedom and association. Greek sensitivities on this issue stem from fear of the "Balkanization" of Greek regions, especially in the north, and irredentism by its neighbors. Given these sensitivities, should we wish to raise this issue at the HDIM, post suggests U.S. statements at the HDIM avoid

accusations of violations of the rights of the "Turkish Minority" or the "Macedonian Minority" and focus instead on a factual, historical discussion of Greece's interpretation of the 1923 Lausanne Treaty and what it means in practice. For example, courts in Greece continue to place legal restrictions on the names of associations involving certain groups, according to the Human Rights Report. The ECHR ruled against Greece in 1998 and 2005 for refusing to register an NGO called "Home of Macedonian Culture" and for failing to protect the rights of a political party that advocates for recognition of a Macedonian ethnicity.

13. (C) Per reftel, Post also would note positive steps that Greece has taken. In 2007, Foreign Minister Dora Bakoyiannis announced the GOG's intention to hire 240 imams for public schools, a long-standing demand of the Muslim min Thrace. Candidate nominahave been made since April, however, because appointments are made seasonally. Appointments are likely to take place in late August. Finally, another measure that was announced and has been partially implemented is the write-off of tax debts of the wakfs (charitable religious organizations).
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